

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated February 6, 2004. Claims 1, 8, 15 and 22 have been amended. Claim 33 has been canceled. No new matter has been added by any of the amendments made herein. No fees are due. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for any insufficiency or to credit any overpayment.

Claims 1 to 5, 7 to 12, 14 to 20, 22 to 27 and 29 to 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,270,412 to Crawford et al. ("*Crawford*"). Claims 6, 13, 21 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Crawford* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,569,084 to Nicastro et al. ("*Nicastro*").

Regarding the rejection under Section 102, amended Claim 1 is directed to a gaming device having a primary game including a plurality of independently operable identical sets of reels where each set of reels has a plurality of reels, a plurality of identical sets of symbols on each of the sets of reels, and a plurality of paylines associated with each of the sets of reels. The paylines are associated exclusively with each of the sets of reels and are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other of the sets of reels. The gaming device also includes a display device adapted to simultaneously display the set of reels and a processor which communicates with the display device. The processor enables the player to wager on the paylines associated with the plurality of sets of reels, evaluates each of the sets of reels wagered on by the player for winning combinations of symbols on any of the paylines, and which provides for each set of reels wagered on by the player, payouts to the player based on the player's wager on the set of reels and the combinations of symbols occurring on the paylines associated with each of the set of reels, regardless of the combination of symbols occurring on any of the other sets of reels. *Crawford* does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of elements of amended Claim 1.

Crawford describes a slot machine with a symbol save feature. Specifically, referring to Fig. 6, *Crawford* describes a slot machine 70 that incorporates multiple sets of reels having the symbol save feature. Each set of reels includes three reels. Three

paylines are associated with each set of reels. The slot machine 70 enables a player to place a wager to activate the three paylines 81, 82 and 83 associated with the primary set of reels 72. (Col. 5, lines 9 to 56.) The player's wager determines the number of symbols that may be saved after the activation of the primary set of reels 72. The saved set of symbols are subsequently used in either the next game or any subsequent game for any of the sets of reels 72, 73 and 74. (Col. 5, lines 22 to 28.) Therefore, the gaming device enables the player to save one or more symbols after the activation of the primary set of reels to be applied to a subsequent game or games to enable the player to have a better opportunity to obtain a winning combination of symbols on one or more of the sets of reels. As described above, any winning combination of symbols occurring on the sets of reels 72, 73 or 74 are based on the symbols occurring on that set of reels and the saved symbol or symbols obtained by the player from the primary set of reels. The winning symbol combinations are therefore dependent upon symbols or symbol combinations that occur on two or more of the sets of reels.

Crawford also describes another version of the slot machine having the symbol save feature which is illustrated in Figs. 6 and 9. In this version, a player makes a wager to activate one or more sets of reels such as reel sets 72, 73 and 74. After the wagered on sets of reels are activated, the primary set of reels are stopped sequentially to indicate symbols on the reels (Col. 6, line 57 to Col. 7, line 34). If at least one winning symbol is indicated on the primary set of reels, the winning symbol is saved and indicated at the same symbol position on the other activated sets of reels. For example, if the winning symbol occurs at the middle position of the leftmost reel on the primary set of reels, the winning symbol is also indicated or displayed at the middle position on the other activated sets of reels. The slot machine therefore duplicates the winning symbol occurring on the primary set of reels 72 on the other sets of activated reels. The slot machine provides payouts to a player based on the symbol combination indicated on the sets of reels. If the primary set of reels 72 does not indicate any winning symbols, the slot machine stops the other activated sets of reels sequentially at random positions to indicate symbols on those sets of reels. The slot machine provides payouts to the player based on any winning symbol indicated on the sets of reels (Col. 7, lines 30 to 37).

Therefore, this version of the slot machine described in *Crawford* does not disclose, teach or suggest providing payouts to a player based on the player's wager on the set of reels and the combinations of symbols occurring on the paylines associated with the set of reels, regardless of the combinations of symbols occurring on any other of the sets of reels as in the amended Claim 1. Instead, *Crawford* describes that the symbol combinations indicated on the other activated sets of reels are based on the winning symbol or winning symbols indicated on the primary set of reels when one or more winning symbols are indicated on the primary set of reels. As described above, if the primary set of reels does not indicate a winning symbol or symbols then the symbols indicated on the other activated sets of reels are subsequently evaluated to determine if any winning symbols are indicated on those reels. The symbols indicated on the other sets of activated reels therefore are not evaluated without first determining the symbols indicated on the primary set of reels. Thus, the payouts provided to the player according to this version of the slot machine in *Crawford* are dependent on the symbols indicated by the primary set of reels and the other activated sets of reels and not on the symbols indicated on each of independent sets of activated reels regardless of the primary set of reels.

Contrary to the *Crawford*, the claimed invention provides awards to a player based on the combinations of symbols occurring on the paylines for each set of reels, regardless of the combination of symbols occurring on any other of the sets of reels. Therefore, the claimed invention provides payouts to a player based on each symbol combination occurring on each set of reels independently from the symbols or symbol combinations occurring on any other set of reels.

For these reasons, *Crawford* does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of amended Claim 1. Therefore, amended Claim 1 and claims 2 to 7 and 30, which depend from amended Claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over *Crawford* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 8 is directed to a gaming device including a plurality of sets of reels, a plurality of sets of symbols on each of the sets of reels, and a plurality of paylines associated with each of the sets of reels where the paylines are associated exclusively with each of the sets of reels and are not associated with any of the reels in

any of the other of the sets of reels. The gaming device also includes the display device and a processor which communicates with the display device. The processor in the display device simultaneously displays the plurality of sets of reels, enables the player to wager on the paylines associated with the plurality of sets of reels, simultaneously spins each of the sets of reels wagered on by the player and evaluates each of the sets of reels wagered on by the player for predetermined combinations of the symbols. For each set of reels wagered on, the processor then provides the player with any award associated with predetermined combinations of symbols obtained on the set of reels, regardless of the predetermined combinations of symbols occurring on any other of the sets of reels. The elements of amended claim are similar to the elements of amended Claim 1. Therefore, as stated above for Claim 1, *Crawford* does not disclose, teach or suggest providing any awards to a player based on predetermined combinations of symbols obtained on each of the sets of reels, regardless of the predetermined combinations of symbols occurring on any of the other sets of reels.

For these reasons, amended Claim 8 and Claims 9 to 14 and 31, which depend from amended Claim 8, are each patentably distinguished over *Crawford* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 15 is directed to a gaming device having a primary game, including a plurality of sets of reels where each of the sets of reels has a plurality of reels, a plurality of symbols which are identical on each of the sets of reels, and a plurality of paylines associated with each of the sets of reels. The paylines are associated exclusively with each of the sets of reels and are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other sets of reels. The gaming device also includes a display device adapted to simultaneously display the sets of reels and a processor which controls the display device. The processor evaluates a wager made by a player, places the wager on one of the paylines associated with the first set of the sets of reels, and places a subsequent wager on one of the paylines associated with the second of the sets of reels, if all of the paylines associated with the first set of reels are wagered on by the player. For each set of reels wagered on by the player, the processor then provides the player any award associated with the predetermined combinations of symbols occurring on the paylines wagered on by the player associated with the set of reels,

regardless of the combinations of symbols occurring on any of the other sets of reels. As described above, *Crawford* does not disclose, teach or suggest providing the player with any awards associated with the predetermined combinations of symbols occurring on the paylines wagered on by the player associated with each of the sets of reels, regardless of the combination of symbols occurring on any of the other sets of reels. Thus, amended Claim 15 and Claims 16 to 21 and 32, which depend from amended claim 15, are each patentably distinguished over *Crawford* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 22 is directed to a gaming device having a primary game, including a plurality of sets of reels where each set of reels has a plurality of reels, a plurality of symbols which are identical on each of the sets of reels, and a plurality of paylines associated with each of the sets of reels. The paylines are associated exclusively with each of the sets of reels and are not associated with any of the reels in any of the other of the sets of reels. The gaming device also includes a display device adapted to simultaneously display the sets of reels and a processor which controls the display device. The processor enables the player to wager on at least one of the sets of reels which the player believes will indicate a winning symbol or combination of the symbols on any of the paylines associated with the set of reels and wager on another of the sets of reels which the player does not believe will indicate a winning symbol or combination of the symbols on said paylines associated with the another set of reels.

Specifically, *Crawford* does not disclose, teach or suggest a gaming device that enables a player to wager on at least one of the sets of reels which the player believes will indicate a winning symbol or winning symbol combination on any of the paylines associated with that set of reels and also wager on another of the sets of reels which the player does not believe will indicate a winning symbol or winning symbol combination on the paylines associated with the another set of reels. For at least these reasons, amended Claim 22 and Claims 23 to 33, which depend from amended Claim 22, are each patentably distinguished over *Crawford* and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 6 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 6 depends from amended Claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 6 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 1 because the combination of *Crawford* and

Nicastro does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 6 in combination with the novel elements of amended Claim 1. For these reasons, Claim 6 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Crawford* and *Nicastro*.

Claims 13 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 13 depends from amended Claim 8. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 13 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 8 because the combination of *Crawford* and *Nicastro* does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 13 in combination with the novel elements of amended Claim 8. For these reasons, Claim 13 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Crawford* and *Nicastro*.

Claims 21 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 21 depends from amended Claim 15. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 21 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 15 because the combination of *Crawford* and *Nicastro* does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 21 in combination with the novel elements of amended Claim 15. For these reasons, Claim 21 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Crawford* and *Nicastro*.

Claim 28 was rejected under §103(a). Claim 28 depends from amended Claim 22. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 28 is allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to amended Claim 22 because *Crawford* and *Nicastro* do not disclose, teach or suggest the novel element of Claim 28 in combination with the novel elements of amended Claim 22. For these reasons, Claim 28 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Crawford* and *Nicastro* and in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: May 6 , 2004